

## The McCanns: Exhausted and under suspicion

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 1 Pre-reading 1: What do you already know about the story?

Have you heard anything about a little girl called Madeleine McCann? If so, decide which of these statements about her story are *True (T)* or *False (F)*.

1. Madeleine disappeared while her family were on holiday in Spain.
2. Madeleine's parents have no other children.
3. The police in Portugal think Mrs McCann may have killed her daughter.
4. They think a bloodstain in the McCann's own car is significant.
5. They do not think her husband was involved.
6. Mr and Mrs McCann believe their daughter is still alive.

#### 2 Pre-reading 2: Key words

Match these key words from the text with the definitions below.

toddlers  
allege

presumed  
bail conditions

strain  
accomplice

tributes  
shattered

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – *someone who helps someone else commit a crime*
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – *believed to be true, but not yet proved*
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – *restrictions on the temporary freedom given to somebody who is suspected of committing a crime*
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – *tension, stress*
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – *extremely tired (and sometimes very upset)*
6. \_\_\_\_\_ – *to say that someone is guilty before it has been proved*
7. \_\_\_\_\_ – *things people say or give to show their sympathy and admiration*
8. \_\_\_\_\_ – *very small children who are just learning to walk*

Now read the story quickly to check your answers to the questions in 1 and 2.

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#### Exhausted and under suspicion, Madeleine's family come home

Esther Addley

Monday September 10, 2007

- 1 It has been a long journey home for Gerry and Kate McCann, but shortly after 1pm yesterday, 135 days after they had left their home in Rothley, Leicestershire, the couple lifted their twin toddlers out of a police people-carrier and shut their front door.
- 2 Having left home on April 27 as mother of an "ordinary family of five", Kate McCann has said repeatedly that she could not contemplate coming back as four, without their daughter Madeleine. In fact, their homecoming was even more painful: they returned as suspects in their own daughter's presumed death.
- 3 The strain was apparent in their faces as the couple emerged from the vehicle. Mrs McCann carried her two-year-old daughter, Amelie, still clasping the pink cuddly cat belonging to Madeleine that she has hardly put down since her daughter disappeared. Mr McCann held their other twin, Sean, in his arms.
- 4 They were accompanied into their smart, new, redbrick house, where they have lived for a year, by a police officer, watched by a crowd of reporters and TV crews, while helicopters from news organizations clattered overhead.
- 5 Neighbours in the quiet road stayed resolutely behind doors, but a small group of onlookers had gathered at the end of the street on the outskirts of the pretty village just north of Leicester.
- 6 Rothley had seen enthusiastic support for the couple in the weeks following Madeleine's disappearance, with hundreds of bunches of flowers and yellow ribbons being attached to its small war memorial. Those tributes were removed some time ago, though some ribbons remain in the local pub.
- 7 Mr and Mrs McCann have been planning for some time to return yesterday, and had already sent some possessions home. Their change in status meant that much of the previous day was spent in calls to the Portuguese authorities and consular officials to clear their trip. Downing Street had also been informed.
- 8 Their journey home began as a grey dawn broke shortly after 7am, and Mr and Mrs McCann emerged hand-in-hand from the borrowed villa in Praia da Luz where they have been living since July.
- 9 With the twins already inside, they climbed into their rented silver Renault Scenic – the vehicle in which police allege a trace of Madeleine's blood was discovered, although it was not hired by the couple until 25 days after her disappearance.
- 10 Forty minutes later, pursued by a dozen cars and motorbikes carrying journalists, one of them standing to film through the car sunroof while being driven at 80mph, they arrived at Faro airport. Mr McCann drove into a reserved area normally used by politicians and VIPs, and they were ushered through check-in to the departure lounge.
- 11 A number of reporters accompanied them on their easyJet flight to East Midlands airport, on which the first two rows of seats were reserved for the family. At about 12.30pm they landed, to be met by yet more film crews.
- 12 Emerging from the airport, a clearly emotional Mr McCann read a brief statement, his son still asleep, slumped over his shoulder. Mr McCann thanked those who had supported the couple during the four months since Madeleine's disappearance, and said he and his wife were returning only after "careful thought" and with the agreement of the Portuguese police. No bail conditions are attached to their arguido (suspect) status, and they retain their passports.
- 13 "Whilst it is heartbreaking to return to the UK without Madeleine, it does not mean we are giving up our search for her," Mr McCann said. "As parents, we cannot give up on our daughter until we know what has happened." He also made a plea for the family's privacy to be respected, saying: "We want the twins as much as is reasonably possible to live an ordinary life in their home country and want to consider the events of the last few days which have been so deeply disturbing."
- 14 In an interview with a Sunday newspaper, Mr McCann had said that he and his wife, who police appear to allege was primarily involved in Madeleine's presumed death with her husband as an accomplice, were "fighting for [their] lives" to clear their names.

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- 15 "We thought we were in our worst nightmare but now it just keeps getting worse and worse. We did not kill our daughter. We will clear our name and we will not give up on Madeleine," he told the News of the World.
- 16 Ten minutes after the couple's arrival back home, Mrs McCann's uncle Brian Kennedy, who is chair of the campaign to raise awareness about Madeleine's disappearance, emerged and spoke briefly to reporters. He thanked the media, whose members were gathered two-deep behind the neat hedge, for being "sympathetic and [behaving] so appropriately", adding that Mr and Mrs McCann would not be emerging from the house for the rest of the day.
- 17 "Gerry made his statement at the airport and that is all he is going to say today," Mr Kennedy said. "You can imagine how they feel – Kate has not been back to this house since the whole terrible affair started."
- 18 "They need to stay in and settle down and try to start a normal life, or one with some appearance of normality in it.
- 19 "Kate and Gerry are just happy to be back at home. They have been through three or four of the most difficult days in their lives. They are tired, very tired. If it was me, I would be absolutely shattered."
- 20 Asked if the couple had plans to return to work – Mr McCann as a cardiac surgeon, his wife as a GP – Mr Kennedy said: "I don't know. I don't think they'll be thinking about that for a while yet."
- 21 Behind him, on one of the downstairs windowsills, was a pile of cuddly toys. The curtains to the upstairs bedrooms, including Madeleine's, painted shocking pink at her request, were drawn.
- 22 A family friend said the room had been left as it was, "ready for her to come home".

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### 3 Comprehension check

1. Why is the McCann's return even worse than solely coming back without their daughter?
2. Are the people who live near the McCanns supporting them?
3. How did the press respect the McCanns' privacy when they returned home?
4. In what ways are they being intrusive?
5. Are the McCanns professional people?

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### 4 Vocabulary development

Find words in the text that mean the following.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – *a large vehicle that can hold more people than a usual car* (para 1)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – *came out (of)* (para 3)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – *soft and nice to hold* (para 3)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – *made a lot of noise* (para 4)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – *deliberately; they decided to, and didn't change their minds* (para 5)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ – *collected, came together* (para 5)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ – *very small quantity of* (para 9)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ – *followed, chased* (para 10)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ – *led (in a formal way)* (para 10)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ – *lying in a very relaxed way* (para 12)
11. \_\_\_\_\_ – *very serious request* (para 13)
12. \_\_\_\_\_ – *leader, head (of an organization, meeting, etc)* (para 16)

### 5 Discussion

1. How has the press in your country responded to the story about Madeleine?
2. Why do you think the case has received so much media attention?

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### KEY

#### 1 Pre-reading 1

1. F (They were in Portugal)
2. F (They have two-year-old twins)
3. T
4. F (Not their own car; a car they hired a month later)
5. F (They think he was an accomplice)
6. T

#### 2 Pre-reading 2: Key words

1. accomplice
2. presumed
3. bail conditions
4. strain
5. shattered
6. allege
7. tributes
8. toddlers

#### 3 Comprehension check

1. Because now they are now suspected of her murder.
2. They kept out of the way when they came home; they left lots of flowers for them, and there is a campaign to find Madeleine.
3. By staying behind the hedge.
4. In Portugal: by chasing after their car; by going on the same flight home; and in England, by hovering overhead in a helicopter.
5. Yes; they are both doctors.

#### 4 Vocabulary development

1. people-carrier
2. emerged
3. cuddly
4. clattered
5. resolutely
6. gathered
7. trace
8. pursued
9. ushered
10. slumped
11. plea
12. chair